



Finance Committee Meeting Agenda Item

Meeting Date: June 23, 2026

Agenda Item: Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Use of Remaining Digital Community Sign Project Funds for a Citywide GIS Public Tree Inventory

Staff Contact (name, email, phone): Kevin Boehm, kboehm@whitewater-wi.gov, 262-473-0122

BACKGROUND

(Enter the who, what when, where, why)

The 2026/2027 Capital Improvement Program included \$60,000 for the purchase and installation of a Digital Community Sign at Flat Iron Park. The final project cost totaled \$76,453, consisting of \$69,850 for the sign and \$6,603 for electrical installation.

The City received a \$50,000 contribution from Discover Whitewater toward the project, resulting in a net City cost of \$26,453. Based on the original project budget of \$60,000, a balance of \$33,547 remains available within the project.

In 2025, the City retained McMahon Associates, Inc. to complete an operational assessment of the Public Works and Parks Department. One of the recommendations identified in the study was to update the City's public tree inventory and develop a systematic terrace tree pruning and replacement schedule. To address this recommendation, staff obtained a proposal from Wachtel Tree Science in the amount of \$48,700 to complete a citywide GIS-based public tree inventory, including street trees, park trees, trees located within open spaces, and trees located on municipal properties.

Staff has also received a proposal from Wachtel Tree Science to prepare and submit a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources 2027 Urban Forestry Grant application for an additional \$650. If awarded, the grant would provide reimbursement of approximately 50 percent of the project cost, or approximately \$24,350.

A comprehensive GIS tree inventory would provide the City with asset management data to support long-term urban forestry planning and operations. The inventory would assist with risk management, development of systematic pruning cycles, identification of hazardous trees, Emerald Ash Borer replacement planning, species diversity analysis, maintenance prioritization, and long-term budget forecasting for tree maintenance and replacement needs. The inventory would also provide a baseline dataset that can be maintained and updated by staff in future years.

Staff is requesting Finance Committee review and consideration of utilizing the remaining balance from the Digital Community Sign Capital Improvement Project to fund the local share of the public tree inventory project. Should the Finance Committee support the project, staff will prepare and distribute a Request for Proposals (RFP) to multiple-qualified firms to ensure the City receives competitive pricing and the best value for the project.

PREVIOUS ACTIONS – COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

(Dates, committees, action taken)

N/A

FINANCIAL IMPACT

(If none, state N/A)

Digital Community Sign Project Budget: \$60,000

Digital Community Sign Project Cost:

- Digital Sign: \$69,850
- Electrical Installation: \$6,603
- Total Project Cost: \$76,453

Discover Whitewater Contribution: (\$50,000)

Net Cost to the City: \$26,453

Remaining Project Balance Available: \$33,547

Proposed GIS Public Tree Inventory: \$48,700

WDNR Urban Forestry Grant Application Assistance: \$650

Total Proposed Project Cost: \$49,350

Potential WDNR Urban Forestry Grant Reimbursement (50%): Approximately (\$24,350)

Estimated Net City Cost After Grant Reimbursement: Approximately \$25,000

Available Digital Community Sign Project Balance: \$33,547

Estimated Remaining Balance After Funding Tree Inventory Match: Approximately \$8,547

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Finance Committee approve the use of the remaining balance from the Digital Community Sign Capital Improvement Project to fund the City's share of a citywide GIS public tree inventory project. Staff further recommends approval to apply for a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Urban Forestry Grant to offset project costs and authorization for staff to prepare and issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to qualified firms for completion of the project.

ATTACHMENT(S) INCLUDED

(If none, state N/A)

- 1.) McMahon Associates Public Works/Parks Operations Assessment Final Report
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